

HJR 8: Childhood Hunger
SUPPORT PAPER FOR THE STAKEHOLDER SUGGESTION:
Increase Use of School Breakfast Programs

End Childhood Hunger in Montana Committee
January 23, 2012

1. Require all schools to have a breakfast program.

- Support start of new programs with one-time start-up costs through grants. Funding of \$500 - \$1000 per school would provide incentive to cover initial costs of new programs. Such efforts have been conducted by OPI in the past with excellent results. More schools are in need of this support.

2. Pay the 30 cent cost of reduced price breakfast meals.

- The difference in federal reimbursement for Free and Reduced Price meals is 30 cents.
- This difference creates serious administrative burdens to school districts.
- Family incomes vary widely from month to month due to varying employment conditions. As a result, child eligibility keeps bouncing back and forth between the Free and Reduced Price categories several times a year.
- This often leads to children missing out on the benefits due to frequent eligibility changes.
- By closing the 30 cent gap, children would stay at the Free price level consistently and the local school staff would be able to manage eligibility without a lot of administrative work time.

3. Require Universal breakfast programs for all schools with high-need children – schools with 40% of more children on the free and reduced price meal programs.

- This is a very critical need in Montana schools and some schools have already started providing Universal programs to meet this need.
- Having Universal breakfast programs in high need schools is one of the main goals of the new federal legislation – The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.
- **The economic benefit to the schools districts cannot be overlooked. Since the level of high-need kids is greater in schools with 40% or more, federal reimbursement covers cost of feeding all children without any financial loss to the school district.**

4. Require local school districts to conduct semi-annual review of participation levels in the school breakfast program.

- School districts with low participation levels should be encouraged to increase levels through program outreach, and reduced barriers to access the programs.
- The most recent annual report by OPI's School Nutrition Program states that **14,552,046 lunches were served in 2010-11 school year, while 4,619,496 breakfasts were served in the same period.**
- **This means that for every 100 lunches served, a little over 31 breakfasts were served.**
- Goal for increased participation should aim at an average level of 55 – 60 kids for every 100 children in the school lunch program – for each school.

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CHILDREN & FAMILIES INTERIM COMMITTEE
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Exhibit 10